

REMARKS

Claims 1-21 are pending in the application. The Applicant hereby requests further examination and reconsideration of the application in view of the foregoing amendments and these remarks.

The specification is amended to provide serial numbers of the cited U.S. patent applications.

In paragraph 3, the Examiner rejected claims 1-21 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Meier. For the following reasons, the Applicants submit that all of the pending claims are allowable over Meier.

The Meier reference is a U.S. patent application publication filed on July 24, 2003. Submitted herewith is a Declaration under 37 CFR 1.131, which demonstrates that (i) the present invention was conceived prior to July 24, 2003 and (ii) the Applicant exercised reasonable diligence in preparing and filing the present patent application on December 22, 2003. The Applicant therefore submits that the present invention predates Meier, that Meier is not a proper prior-art reference, and that the rejections of claims based on Meier should be withdrawn. It is therefore submitted that the rejections of claims 1-21 over Meier have been overcome.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, the Applicant believes that claims 1-21 are in condition for allowance. Therefore, the Applicant believes that the entire application is now in condition for allowance, and early and favorable action is respectfully solicited.

Fees

During the pendency of this application, the Commissioner for Patents is hereby authorized to charge payment of any filing fees for presentation of extra claims under 37 CFR 1.16 and any patent application processing fees under 37 CFR 1.17 or credit any overpayment to **Mendelsohn & Associates, P.C. Deposit Account No. 50-0782.**

The Commissioner for Patents is hereby authorized to treat any concurrent or future reply, requiring a petition for extension of time under 37 CFR § 1.136 for its timely submission, as incorporating a petition for extension of time for the appropriate length of time if not submitted with the reply.

Respectfully submitted,

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